

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANA 01298 190949Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
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R 181335Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4173
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCEUR
DIA WASHDC

S E C R E T SANA 1298

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINT, YE
SUBJ: GHASHMI MOVES TO CONSOLIDATE POWER

BEGIN SUMMARY: YAR PRESIDENT GHASHMI HAS OUSTED
RECALCITRANT ARMY LEADER WITH SHOW OF FORCE THAT MAY PRESAGE
HIS TACTICS IN DEALING WITH HIS RIVAL ON COMMAND COUNCIL
ABDALLAH ABDAL ALIM. END SUMMARY.

1. NIGHT OF HAMDY ASSASSINATION, TROOPS FROM 1ST
INFANTRY BRIGADE IN AMRAN, JUST TO NORTH OF SANA, MOVED ON
CAPITAL IN APPARENT EFFORT TO FULFILL PREPLANNED ANTI-COUP
ACTION. UNIT WAS UNDER THE COMMAND OF MAJAHID AL-
KOUHALI, LT. COL. FROM NORTH WHO FOR SEVERAL DAYS AFTER
GHASHMI ACCESSION REFUSED TO PLEDGE LOYALTY TO NEW REGIME.

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KOUHALI HAS SINCE CONTINUED TO BE THORN IN SIDE OF
GHASHMI AND REFUSED ORDER TO RELOCATE HIS UNIT FROM HIGH-
LANDS TO TIHAMA (SEE SANA 0747). LAST WEEK
GHASHMI MOVED AGAINST KOUHALI WITH LARGE FORCE
OF TANKS, ARMORED CARS, INFANTRY AND ARTILLERY AND IN
SHOWDOWN WHICH FORTUNATELY DID NOT INVOLVE ANY
SHOOTING, REMOVED KOUHALI AND SIX OF HIS OFFICERS.

KOUHALI HAS BEEN BANISHED TO MILITARY ATTACHE JOB IN PRAGUE AND TANKS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT HAVE RUMBLED BACK THROUGH SANA TO CAMPS AROUND THIS CAPITAL CITY.

2. PERSISTENT STORY COMING TO SURFACE NOW IS THAT KOUHALI INTRANSIGENCE WAS ENCOURAGED BY GHASHMI RIVAL AND FELLOW COMMAND COUNCIL MEMBER, ABDALLAH ABDAL ALIM. NUMEROUS STORIES OF GHASHMI-ABDAL ALIM RIVALRY NOW GIVING WAY TO PREDICTIONS THAT GHASHMI WILL REMOVE ABDAL ALIM SOON. LATTER IS FROM THE SOUTHERN PART OF YAR AND IN CHARGE OF PARATROOPERS WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN BULWARK OF GOVERNMENT AGAINST NORTHERN TRIBESMEN. ABDALLAH ABDAL ALIM IS ALSO KIND OF LEFTIST WHO HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF TOLERATING AND EVEN SUPPORTING PDRY POLITICAL ACTION AND SUBVERSION IN QATABA, DAMT AND RADAH AREA. VARIOUS REPORTS ARE CIRCULATING IN CAPITAL NOW OF LEVEL OF SUCH INCIDENTS IN THE SOUTH BUT MOST RELIABLE SOURCES SAY THAT IT IS NOT HIGH OR INCREASING. IN ANY CASE, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT ABDAL ALIM IS NOW BEING CHARGED WITH FOMENTING ANTI-REGIME TROUBLES IN NORTH AS WELL AS IN SOUTH.

3. PRIME MINISTER ABDAL AZIZ ABDAL GHANI, HOWEVER, TOLD AMBASSADOR ON 14 MARCH THAT THERE WERE NO RPT NO PROBLEMS BETWEEN ABDAL ALIM AND GHASHMI AND THAT
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STORY OF INCIDENTS IN SOUTH WERE SIMPLY MADE UP. SOUTH, HE SAID, WAS QUIET. PRIME MINISTER INSISTED THAT ABDAL ALIM HAD TAKEN SIDE OF GHASHMI AGAINST KOUHALI AND REMAINED LOYAL AND IMPORTANT MEMBER OF REGIME.

COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER, AS ANOTHER SOUTHERNER, IS VERY ANXIOUS TO MINIMIZE NORTH-SOUTH TROUBLES, ESPECIALLY IN THE ARMY. WE TEND TO THINK THAT GHASHMI IS LOOKING FOR RIGHT MOMENT AND CIRCUMSTANCES TO DO IN HAMDI LOYALIST ABDALLAH ABDAL ALIM, JUST AS HE HAS NOW DONE IN KOUHALI.
SCOTES

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